

Flu Season

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What Is The Flu?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory virus that has symptoms ranging from mild to more severe. If not treated, the flu may sometimes be fatal. According to the Department of Health, flu season is generally considered to fall between October and May, with the peak of the season falling between late December and March. Any one is at risk for the flu; however, children under the age of 5, pregnant women, people with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or pulmonary disease, as well as people over the age of 65 are more likely to experience complications. Symptoms may appear suddenly, so it is best to be prepared.

How is H1N1 (Swine) flu Different?

The 2009 H1N1, sometimes referred as "swine flu", is a new strand of the influenza virus that has been spreading throughout the country. It is spread in the same way that the regular influenza virus is spread, coughing or sneezing by people who already have the virus, or touching surfaces or object with the flu virus on it and then touching your mouth or nose. Symptoms and treatment of seasonal influenza and H1N1 are similar and a H1N1 vaccination should be available mid-Fall 2009.

How Do I Know If I Have The Flu?

Common symptoms of the flu consist of:

- High fever (your temperature is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, 38 degrees Celsius)

- Headache
- Body aches
- Chills
- Extreme Sleepiness
- Dry Cough
- Runny nose
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

You do not have to experience all of these symptoms to have the flu. If you experience one or more, please contact your physician or healthcare provider.

If you experience flu-like symptoms and have a chronic medical condition, you may need to seek additional or immediate medical attention. There is also additional information and resources available for parents and/or expectant mothers. Click the links below to find out more information pertaining to your condition.

For People with Medical Conditions (asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, etc.):
<http://www.flu.gov/individualfamily/healthconditions/index.html>

For Parents: <http://www.flu.gov/individualfamily/parents/index.html>

For Expectant Mothers: <http://www.flu.gov/individualfamily/parents/pregnant/index.html>

How Can I Treat The Flu?

- Wash Your Hands- It is recommended that you wash your hands with soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds, as often as possible. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers may also be used when soap and water is not available—be sure to rub your hands until the gel is dry.

- Cover Your Nose and Mouth When You Cough or Sneeze- Practicing respiratory etiquette is a great way to prevent the spread of the flu. After coughing or sneezing, be sure to throw the tissue in the trash and then proceed to wash your hands.

- Avoid Touching Your Face- Germs spread easily. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth at all costs.

- Try to Avoid Close Contact with Sick People- If you must have close contact, try to wear a face mask or N95 disposable respirator. Avoid re-using these products and remember to wash your hands after disposal.

- Stay at Home- If you are sick, it is recommended you stay home for at least 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to prevent the virus from spreading further.

- Follow Public Health Advice- Make sure you stay informed of flu announcements in your community. If there is an outbreak, there may be information regarding school and business closures, as well as other measures taken to protect your neighbors and you.

Who should get vaccinated for seasonal flu?

Seasonal flu vaccine is recommended for everyone, but especially the young (younger than 5 years) and seniors (older than 50 years). People should talk to their physician if they are considering seasonal flu vaccination and have had an allergic reaction to chicken eggs, or a previous serious reaction to a seasonal flu shot.

Who should get vaccinated for H1N1 swine flu?

Early supplies of H1N1 swine flu vaccine initially are expected to be more limited than supplies of seasonal flu vaccine. However, health officials anticipate enough vaccine will become available to immunize everyone who wants it.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the H1N1 swine flu vaccine be given to the following priority groups while vaccine is in limited supply: pregnant women, people caring for infants younger than six months, health care and emergency medical services responders, people ages 6 months - 24 years, and people ages 25 - 64 years with health conditions associated with a higher risk of medical complications from the flu.

Will one vaccine protect against seasonal and H1N1 swine flu?

No. Each virus has its own vaccine.

I think I have the flu. What actions should I take?

People should call their health care provider and discuss whether they need to be seen or if should stay home. People with flu-like symptoms should avoid contact with others until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours.

Where Can I Find Flu Vaccinations?

H1N1 flu vaccines will be available shortly, however it is still suggested that you receive a regular seasonal flu shot this season. For information on where to receive a flu shot in your area, and for updates on the H1N1 vaccine, please visit your county's link below:

For Brevard County Flu Vaccines: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chd/Brevard/comm_hlth/immus.htm

For Orange County Flu Vaccines: <http://www.orchd.com/Flu/Flu.asp>

For Seminole County Flu Vaccines: <http://seminolecohealth.com/Immunizations/index.asp>

For Volusia County Flu Vaccines: www.volusiahealth.com or <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chd/volusia/FluFighters.html>

FL-24 Health Department Contact Information:

Florida Department of Health

2585 Merchants Row Boulevard

Tallahassee, FL 32399

850-245-4444

Flu Information Line (877) 352-3581

Florida Vaccines for Children Program

4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-11

Tallahassee, FL 32399

1-800-483-2543

FloridaVFC@doh.state.fl.us

Brevard County Health Department

2575 N Courtenay Pkwy

Merritt Island, FL 32953

(321) 454-7111

FAX (321) 454-7115

Orange County Health Department

6101 Lake Ellenor Drive

Orlando, FL 32809

(407) 858-1400

FAX (407) 858-5514

Seminole County Health Department

400 West Airport Blvd.

Sanford, FL 32773-5496

(407) 665-3000

FAX (407) 665-3259

Volusia County Health Department

1845 Holsonback Dr.

Daytona Beach, FL 32117

(386) 274-0614

FAX (386) 274-0612

Additional Resources:

Florida SHOTS: <https://www.flshots.com/what/index.html>

Bureau of Immunization: <http://www.immunizeflorida.org/index.html>

FLU.GOV: <http://www.flu.gov/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/>